

position of shipping companies, many of whom were not able to pay even interest on loan.

- (3) Massive scrapping of uneconomic and old ships undertaken by Indian shipping companies to the extent of 1.95 million DWT.
- (4) The financial outlay of Rs. 670.47 crores provided in the VIIth plan being inadequate to meet the physical target of 7.5 Million GRT.

(c) The Government have taken the following steps to simplify the ship acquisition procedure:-

- (1) Evolved a streamlined procedure for licensing of acquisition of ships through the Ship Acquisition Licensing Committee (SALC).
- (2) Permitted companies to acquire ships for replacement in excess of 25% of tonnage to be replaced.
- (3) Simplified the procedure for price/technical clearance of ship acquisitions.
- (4) With a view to help companies under rehabilitation acquire additional tonnage, these companies are allowed to finance 60% of the vessel price out of free foreign exchange against the norms of 40%.
- (5) The Government is continuously reviewing the scope for further liberalisation in the area of sale and purchase of ships, scrapping of ships, etc.
- (6) Fiscal concessions were offered to the shipping industry to help them to raise the necessary capital for financing ship acquisition in the 90s. These were passed by Parliament in the Direct Tax Laws (Second Amend-

ment) Act, 1989.

Housing Problem of Paradip Port Employees

1184. SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute housing problem for the Port employees at Paradip Port; and

(b) if so, the special measures proposed to be taken to ease the problem?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An outlay of Rs. 6.00 crores has been proposed for housing for cargo handling workers and employees of the port in the Eighth Plan. The Eighth Plan has not been finalised.

Non-Availability of Exchange Set for Installation of Electronic Telephone Exchange at Gangtok

1185. SHRI NANDU THAPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the installation of an Electronic Exchange in place of the 500 line capacity at Gangtok is held up due to non-availability of Exchange set;

(b) if so, the time by which the Government propose to provide the Exchange set so as to make of operative; and

(c) the steps taken to acquire the set so far?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PARKASH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 91-92.

(c) The exchange equipment has been allotted and purchase order has been placed on M/s. ITI. The early supply of equipment has been requested.

Use of Rice Straw

1186. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the purpose for which rice-straw can be used;

(b) whether rice-straw can be used as cattle feed and also to solve power problem in rural areas; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAYANTILAL VIRCHANDBHAISHAH): (a) Sir, Rice-straw can be used for wide variety of applications such as feed, fuel, thatching, packaging, paper & pulp, paddy straw mats and bags, rope, straw boards, compost, speciality items.

(b) and (c). Rice straw is used as cattle feed in some of the rice growing areas. Its nutritive value and palatability can be improved by urea treatment. Power can be generated in rural areas by setting up rice straw based thermal power plants.

Thoubal Multi-Purpose Project of Manipur

1187. PROF. MEIJINLUNG KAMSON: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any damage has been

caused to the construction of the on-going Thoubal multi-purpose project of Manipur in a recent incident;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the initial cost of the project and the expenditure likely to be incurred on the project; and

(d) the time by which it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b). No such information has been received at the Centre.

(c) The originally estimated cost of the project of Rs. 47.25 crores, approved in the year 1980, has now been revised by the state Government to Rs. 138.84 crores. An expenditure of Rs. 41.85 crores has been incurred upto the end of VII Plan and likely expenditure during 1990-91 is Rs. 18.37 crores.

(d) During VIII Plan.

Prawn Fish Seed Hatchery at Badapokharan in Maharashtra

1188. SHRI RAM NAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 3674 on 30 August, 1990 and state:

(a) the details of corrective measures taken by the State/Union Government to make the Prawn Fish Seed Hatchery functional;

(b) the time bound programme to complete the structural repairs and modifications; and

(c) the reasons for not anticipating the